

## OFFICIALS RELEASE 2030 UPDATE TO TULARE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

Tulare County planners on Thursday, March 25, 2010 will release the latest draft of County's proposed 2030 General Plan Update for formal review, and have posted electronic versions of the related documents online at: [www.co.tulare.ca.us](http://www.co.tulare.ca.us)

The County's General Plan provides a comprehensive, long-term plan for land use and physical development in the unincorporated areas of the County. The County's General Plan consists of development policies that guide land use decisions within the County.

The proposed Planning Framework Element modernizes the policies of the Urban Boundary Element around cities and unincorporated communities, and also formalizes Hamlet Development Boundaries and Mountain Service Centers. This has the effect of standardizing land use rules to direct new growth near existing growth, helping to make unincorporated areas economically viable.

One of the highlights of the general plan is that while directing most development toward areas near the incorporated cities, it allows for limited development in the unincorporated communities, which have been overlooked for far too long, Board Chairman Steve Worthley said. This is an important part of the Countys desire to raise the quality of life for residents in smaller communities.

By strengthening the Planning Framework Element, the County encourages the preservation of agricultural land and open space and helps reduce urban sprawl. Planners conducted extensive community outreach to gather input from affected residents and stakeholders.

The Board of Supervisors did not want to develop this General Plan update in a vacuum, we really wanted to hear what the public had to say about our plans for the future of Tulare County, Chairman Worthley said.

County began work on a comprehensive revision of the general plan more than nine years ago. In the summer of 2003, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors approved a work program to prepare an update of the Countys General Plan. Beginning in 2004 and concluding in 2007, a series of 19 workshops, 11 public Board of Supervisors study sessions, 12 technical advisory committee meetings and four joint Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission meetings were held to discuss, review, recommend and provide public comment on the General Plan 2030 Update.

The County was on the verge of issuing its general plan update a couple of years ago, but then the state required us to address climate change, Supervisor Ennis said. Actually that delay allowed County staff to develop a comprehensive water supply evaluation, and thats a very positive thing in my mind.

A draft General Plan update along with environmental review documents was released for public comment in 2008. At the direction of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors, County staff has completely revised its the environmental review documents and modified the General Plan policy documents in order to accomplish the following:

- Develop a comprehensive water supply evaluation
- Complete a greenhouse gas inventory, and develop a proposed climate action plan as an implementation measure of the County General Plan.
- Incorporate an unprecedented, open-ended invitation to the cities for cooperation in the fringe areas of the County adjacent to city boundaries.

The County has worked tirelessly hand in hand with the incorporated cities over the past year to provide a comprehensive general plan that will allow the County to plan its future, Supervisor Phil Cox said. This will not impact on city boundaries in a negative way.

The 2030 General Plan Update maintains the County's long standing tradition of supporting sustainable agricultural resources through the Rural Valley Lands Plan. It also helps direct future urban growth into established areas that contain existing development through the proposed Planning Framework Element, which replaces the existing Urban Boundaries Element.

Supervisor Pete Vander Poel said he is appreciative of the extraordinary effort County staff and community members have played in helping to shape the 2030 General Plan Update, noting that during the extensive review process and community outreach efforts many excellent suggestions and ideas have been brought forward.

I am glad to see our General Plan moving along, Vander Poel said. The County worked diligently to take into account all interests, from agricultural to environmental, incorporated city to unincorporated community and ultimately the rights of the individual property owner. As we move forward with this process. All interests are encouraged to remain engaged in the process.

#### Public Involvement

After the release of the January 2008 version of the General Plan 2030 Update, the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission held a joint public hearing on February 26, 2008 regarding the January 2008 version of the General Plan 2030 Update. The Planning Commission then continued the public hearing to a regular meeting of the Planning Commission on April 23, 2008 and again on July 23, 2008. Joint Workshops were held with the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on November 18, 2008 and September 1, 2009.

#### Contact Information

Any written comments should be sent to the Tulare County Resource Management Agency at the following address: Tulare County Resource Management Agency, Government Plaza, 5961 South Mooney Boulevard, Visalia, CA 93277 to the attention of David Bryant, Project Planner.